1: Holmberg--68 (1941-42) 1950 Siriono
846

"For a couple of days immediately following childbirth, about every half hour or so, the mother can be observed pressing the infant's head and hips in this fashion to make it beautiful."

1: Holmberg--68 [6] (1941-42) 1950 Siriono
116, 846

"For about 3 days following childbirth the Siriono family undergoes a series of observances and rites which we may loosely term the couvade. These rites are designed to protect the life of the infant and to insure its good health. Not only is the infant believed to be extremely delicate during the period immediately following birth, and thus readily subject to disease and death, but it is thought still intimately to be connected with the parents and profoundly to be affected by their activities. Consequently the latter are restricted in various ways. Except for satisfying the calls of nature they do not move outside of the house. They stay close to their hammocks, and are subject to a number of food taboos. Neither jaguar nor coati is eaten lest the infant break out with sores all over its body; paca cannot be eaten or the infant may lose its hair; papaya cannot be eaten lest the infant become a victim of diarrhea. Parents do not suffer much during this period, however, as there is a long list of foods which they can eat: guan, agouti, monkey, tapir, deer, peccary, tortoise, fish, manioc, maize, etc. Some informants told me that maize was taboo during the couvade period—to prevent the infant from having pains in the stomach—but since I never saw this taboo observed it is probably not a functioning one."

1: Holmberg--68-69 (1941-42) 1950 Siriono
116, 304, 846

"More important than the abstinence from certain foods is the carrying out of certain other [69] practices that must follow the birth of every baby. On the day after the birth both parents are scarified on the upper and lower legs with the eye tooth of a rat or a squirrel. Usually the father is scratched first. No particular relative or person is responsible for performing this operation, though in the case of the mother it is usually done by the husband. Before the husband is scarified he puts on a necklace or two of coati teeth and winds the new baby sling, which has been covered with uruku, around his neck. He stands by his hammock during the operation. The person doing the scarifying squats down and makes long scratches on the outside of the upper legs from the hips to the knees and on the back and outside of the lower legs from the knees to the ankles. As these scratches are relatively superficial, not a great deal of blood flows. Immediately after the operation is finished the legs are washed and covered with uruku.

After the husband has been scarified, he removes the baby sling and the necklaces; the mother then puts these on and undergoes the same operation, usually at the hands of her husband. While the mother is being scarified, the baby is left lying in the hammock or is held by a cowife or sister. According to the Siriono, this practice of scratching the legs has the purpose of getting rid of old blood, which might cause the child to be sick. It might thus be regarded as a purification rite."

1: Holmberg--69 (1941-42) 1950 Siriono
116, 846

"Except during the sacrification rite the parents stay close to their hammocks on the day following the birth, the father resting and the mother attending the infant. They do little cooking themselves but are fed by other members of the extended family. There is, however, no taboo on their doing some cooking, and occasionally one sees a mother or father roasting an ear of corn or a root of manioc in the fire at this time."

1: Holmberg--69 [2] (1941-42) 1950 Siriono
116, 302, 846

"The most significant thing that happens to the infant on the day following its birth is that it gets its first haircut in the traditional style of the band. This consists in depilating the forehead to a high semicircle. Since this operation is a very painful one, the mother usually pulls out a few hairs at a time and then lets the infant calm down for a half hour or so before continuing the operation. Actually it is a very frustrating experience for the young baby, who struggles its utmost to avoid the pain. Nevertheless, by the end of the second day the infant is without eyebrows, and the hair on the front part of its head has been pulled out. The removed hair is saved, wrapped in cotton string, and covered with beeswax. It is then made into a necklace, which the mother ties around her neck to promote the growth of the infant's hair."

1: Holmberg--69 [3] (1941-42) 1950 Siriono
116, 301, 846

"The second day after the birth of the child is spent in ornamenting the parents with feathers. Both are decorated in exactly the same way. A cowife or potential wife of the father usually performs the task. Again the man is usually decorated first. After the hair is trimmed, red and yellow feathers of the toucan are glued into the hair at the front of the head, tufts of curassow down covered with uruku are glued into the hair over the ears, and tufts of breast down of the harpy eagle (also covered with uruku) are glued into the hair at the back of the head. In addition to these feather ornaments in the hair, both parents are decorated with new cotton string covered with uruku. This is wound around the legs just below the knees, around the arms above the elbows, and around the neck. The face, arms, and legs are then smeared with uruku and the decoration is complete.

These decorations are sometimes applied to other members of the family, especially to a cowife or, in the case of a multiple birth, to either the cowife or sister of the mother who is designated to take immediate care of one of the babies. In such instances the cowives are decorated in the same fashion as the parents. In two of the cases which I observed, boys of about the age of puberty and standing in the yánde or potential spouse relationship to the mother also underwent the same ceremonies as the father, doubtless because they, too, had been having intercourse with the mother before and during pregnancy. The relationship between the parents and the child is thus generalized to coparents as well. Children and other members of the family, however, are not decorated, although a feather or two may be added to their hair while the parents are being adorned."

"The parents undergo no further rites on the second day after birth, but there still remain the ceremonies that terminate the couvade. These usually take place on the third day after birth, although they are sometimes postponed until the fourth, but they do not depend on any particular circumstances, such as the dropping off of the navel cord. In these terminal rites uruku is again [70] smeared on the members of the family undergoing the couvade. Necklaces made from the base of the quill feathers of a species of hawk are placed around the necks of the father and mother. The mother by this time is also wearing a necklace containing the hair plucked from the infant's head. A few miniature baskets with a very open weave are hastily woven by the mother from a leaf of motacú palm and filled with the ashes of a dying fire. She then takes up the baby and places it for the first time in the new sling, which is dyed bright red with uruku. The father picks up his bow and a couple of arrows, and the family starts off on a trail into the forest. As a rule, but not always, the father marches ahead, carrying his bow and arrows to protect the infant from danger. The mother follows behind, with the baby in the sling, carrying in one hand a basket of ashes, which she slowly scatters along the trail to purify it, and in the other a calabash of water. If there are any other children in the family, or cowives or yánde, they may also join the party and scatter ashes along the trail. Usually not a word is said as the party proceeds to its destination. After walking for about 5 minutes the entire group halts. The mother sits down, and her

husband brings her a palm leaf from which she begins to construct a carrying basket. The father in the meantime goes in quest of firewood. After firewood has been collected and placed in the basket, the party starts home without ceremony. When they arrive about 100 yards from the hut, the baskets which contained the ashes are hung on to bushes a few feet from the trail. Upon entering the hut the parents kindle a new fire with the wood carried back from the forest. The infant is then given a bath from the calabash of water which the mother took into and brought back from the forest. The period of couvade is then considered to be officially over, and the normal activities of life can be resumed."

2: Holmberg--190 [2] (1941-42) 1946 Siriono
116, 846

"Following childbirth, a woman refrains from intercourse for about a month, but there is no prescribed period after delivery that she must abstain."

5: Radwan--295[2] T-3 (1928?) 1928 Siriono
116, 302, 846, 852

On festive occasions they paint themselves. Thus, a married couple painted themselves red on the third day after the birth of a child; sparkling in the same colour was the little hammock in which the mother, accompanied by the husband, carried it for its first walk outside the hut the next day. All members of this family had decorated their hair with feathers. On the preceding days, the father had to be confined to the child-birth bed. Even the new-born babe would be shorn of its eye-brows and forehead hair in the same manner, during which it cried lustily.